

JANUARY 29, 2003

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS REQUEST MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BUSH ON IRAQ TO HEAR DIRECTLY FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES IN CONGRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and members of Congress opposed to the Bush Administration's approach towards Iraq, requested a meeting with the President to discuss the current policy.

The members wrote, " We believe it is important for you to hear these concerns directly from the people's representatives in Congress. We are aware that you have met with members of the House and Senate who are supporters of your administration's policy in Iraq. We would request, therefore, that as President of all the people in this country, not just those who agree with you, that you schedule a meeting for Members of the House and Senate who are opposed to the current approach your Administration is taking towards Iraq.

" Over the past several months we have received a huge amount of correspondence from our constituents who believe that the crisis in Iraq can be resolved without bloodshed. They believe, as we do, that a "preemptive" attack on Iraq will result in a massive increase in anti-Americanism throughout the world, and will make our country less safe from terrorist attacks, not more safe, " they added.

□ The full text of the letter to President Bush is below:

January 29, 2003

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As Members of Congress who share the concern of millions of Americans about our country's move towards war with Iraq, we would like to request a meeting to discuss this issue with you.

Over the past several months we have received a huge amount of correspondence from our constituents who believe that the crisis in Iraq can be resolved without bloodshed.□

They believe, as we do, that a "preemptive" attack on Iraq will result in a massive increase in anti-Americanism throughout the world, and will make our country less safe from terrorist attacks, not more safe.

Our constituents are also concerned that if the United States ignores the United Nations and international law, we will help create a climate bordering on international anarchy and a mind-set in which all nations will feel freer to attack other nations for whatever reason. In a world where at least eight countries have nuclear weapons, this is not a good idea. Under those conditions, what moral authority will the United States have in calling for peace and negotiations in the Middle East, or between India and Pakistan, or China and Taiwan?

Further, many people in our districts are extremely fearful about the costs associated with a war in Iraq and the ensuing occupation. At a time when we have a growing deficit, and you are proposing cut-backs in veterans' needs, Medicare, education and environmental protection, a war with Iraq could cost over one hundred billion dollars and increase both the suffering of the present generation and the financial liabilities of future generations.

We believe it is important for you to hear these concerns directly from the people's representatives in Congress. We are aware that you have met with members of the House and Senate who are supporters of your administration's policy in Iraq. We would request, therefore, that as President of all the people in this country, not just those who agree with you, that you schedule a meeting for Members of the House and Senate who are opposed to the current approach your Administration is taking towards Iraq.

We understand that your schedule is limited but due to the urgent subject matter of discussion we request a meeting with you as soon as possible.